

First Christian Church
553 Fallowfield Avenue
Charleroi
Washington County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5358

HABS
PA,
63-CHAR,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

HABS NO. PA-5358

Location: 553 Fallowfield Avenue
Charleroi, Washington County, PA

USGS Monongahela Quadrangle
N4007.5 - W7952.5/7.5

Present Owner: Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington

Present Use: Vacant

Significance:

The first Christian Church in Charleroi, PA is a Romanesque Revival structure built in 1901. It is in an area of Charleroi Borough determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The structure was the location for worship services for the First Christian Church of Charleroi (Disciples of Christ) until 1974.

PART I - HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: The structure was constructed in 1901 and dedicated as the home of the First Church of Charleroi on July 14, 1901. The source of this is "History of the First Christian Church", a brief history included in the program for the dedication of the congregation's new facilities in Fallowfield Township, PA.
2. Architect: R.L. Barnhart
3. Original and subsequent owners:
 - Original (1901) to 1977 : First Christian Church
 - 1977 to 1986 : Mon Valley Community Services, Inc
 - 1986 to present : Redevelopment Authority of Washington County
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans are available. But the church history cited above notes that the building cost \$16,000 to construct in 1901
6. Alterations and additions: During the summer of 1914, a pipe organ was added. Andrew Carnegie of Pittsburgh donated half of the amount needed and the congregation supplied the other half. This was the first pipe organ in Charleroi.

In November of 1919, the church was rededicated as a result of a basement added to provide kitchen and Sunday School space. In 1977, the interior was renovated to convert the structure to a community center.

B. Historical Context

As mentioned, the structure was built in 1901 and is considered to be a good example of Romanesque Revival architecture. Other buildings within this part of the Borough of Charleroi date from this same era. The structure is located in an area of the Borough determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

PART II - ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The building is a good example of Romanesque Revival style architecture.
2. Condition: Fair

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Lot - 66' x 100'
Building - 58' x 94' (see sketch)
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Walls: Solid masonry with brick and stone exterior and plaster interior.
4. Structural Systems, framing: Wood framed floors and roof
Concrete slab basement floors.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Two stone & concrete front porches
& stairs with wrought iron railings.
6. Chimney: Brick
7. Openings:
 - a) Doorways and doors: Stone and brick doorway with painted paneled wood doors. Main entry doorways are arched.
 - b) Windows and shutters: Stained leaded glass windows with pointed arch or arch heads on front section, double hung on balance or building.
8. Roof:
 - a) Shape, covering: Hip/gable with asbestos "tile" roof covering on front section and asphalt shingles on rear facing section.
 - b) Cornice, cover: n/a
 - c) Dormers, cupolas, towers: Two italianate brick towers with arched brick openings and steep hipped roof with asbestos tile roofing.

C. Description of the Interior

1. Floor Plans: See sketch
2. Stairways: One wood frame type with finish oak railing and balusters. Stair treads have rubber finish.
3. Flooring: Hardwood floors
Basement concrete slab
4. Walls and Ceiling finish: Plaster walls and ceiling with suspended fiber coverings, hardwood trim.
5. Openings:
 - a) Doorways and doors: Finish oak trim on doorways. Panel finish oak doors.
 - b) Windows: Stained leaded glass windows on front section with double hung wood windows on rest of building. Interior casing of finish oak.
6. Decorative features and trims: finish oak chair rail and railings.
7. Hardware: painted metal knobs and hinges.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a) Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: "Utica" gas fixed broiler with copper line system and circulating pumps (800,000 BTU input; 640 BTU output). Roof mounted compressor. "Magic Chef" air conditioner and remote compressor.
 - b) Lighting: 400 amp service, three phase wiring. Romex and rigid conduit surface wire molding. Emergency reserve lighting. "Ademco 508" automatic fire alarm sensor.
 - c) Plumbing: Cooper tubing and drains connected to cast iron metal drain. Sprinkler system. Gas hot water. Restroom has china water closet with wall rail, lowboy style china sink and urinal.
9. Original furnishings: None exist

D. Site

1. General setting and orientations: Central Business District - commercial area
2. Historic landscape design: Limited open space.
3. Outbuildings: None

PART III - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: None available

B. Historical Reviews: None available

C. Interviews: George Hogan
William Lettrich

D. Bibliography

1. Commemorative programs prepared for the following First Christian Church celebrations:
 - a) Ninety years of Witness and Service - October 5, 1980;
 - b) Dedication of new facilities in Fallowfield Township - October 16-18-20, 1974;
 - c) Mortgage Burning for Fallowfield Township facility - June 10, 1984

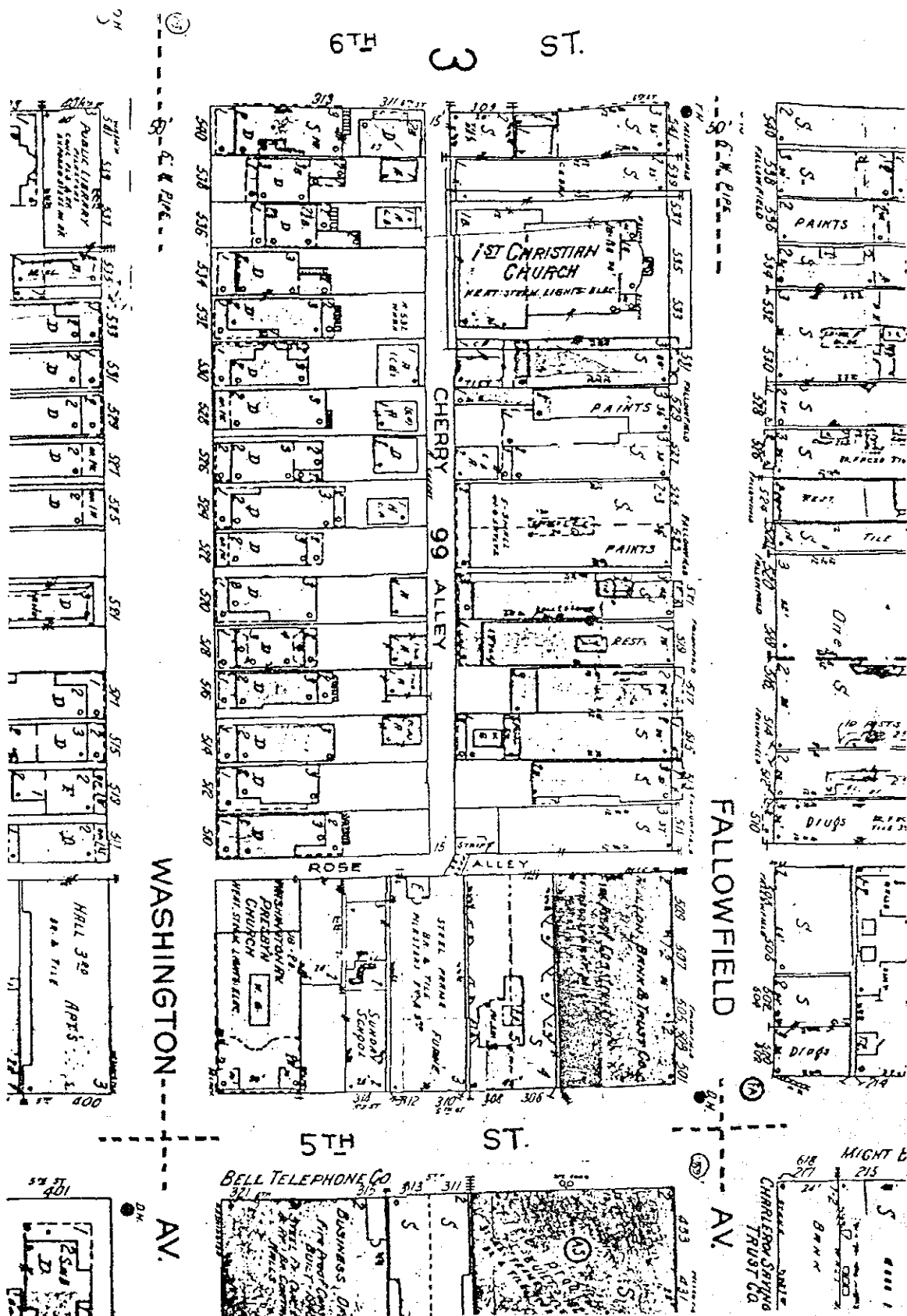
E. Likely sources not yet investigated: None known - Pertinent facts from church records are contained in above cited reference.

F. Supplemental material: None

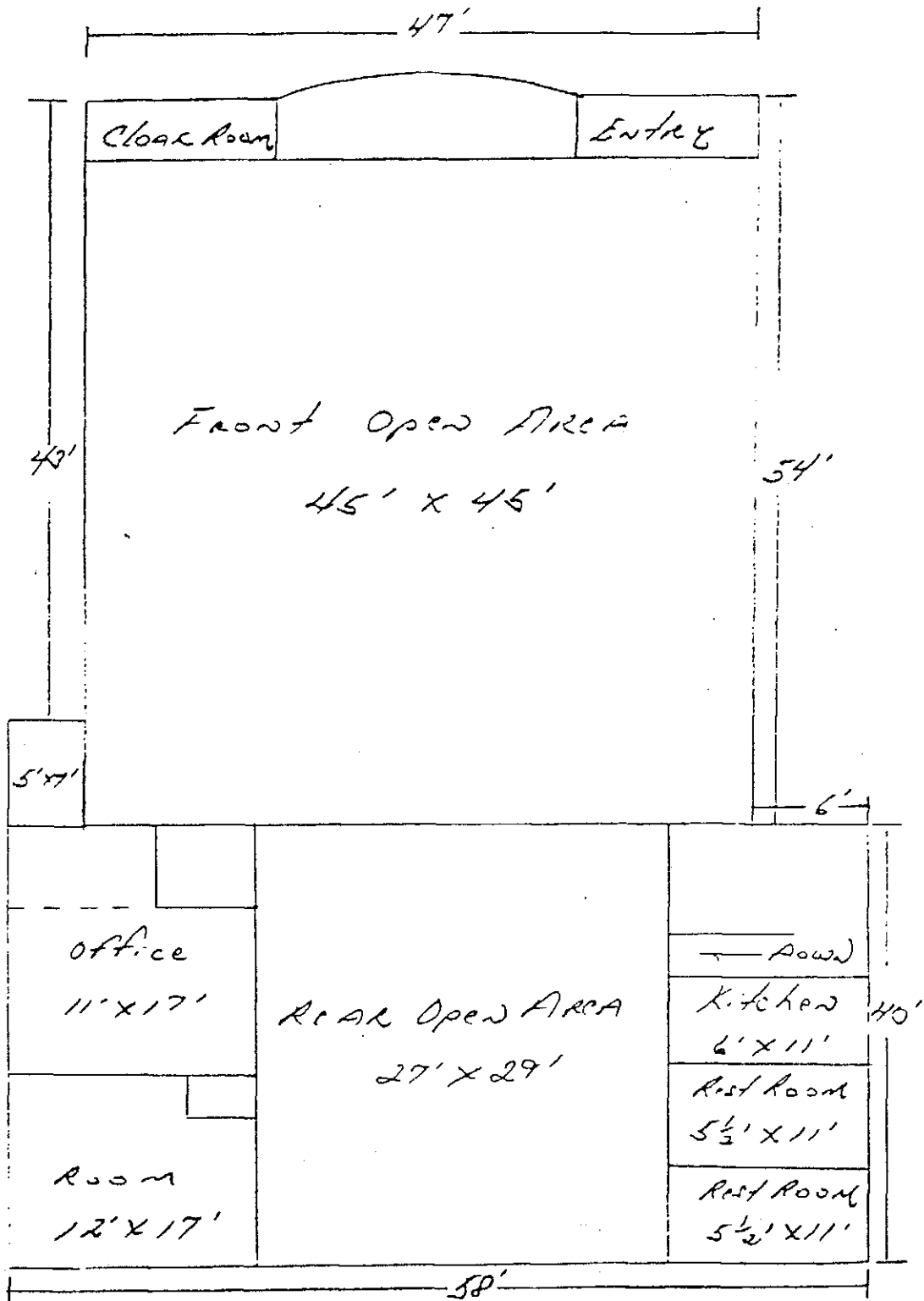
PART IV - PROJECT INFORMATION

It is the intent of this project to demolish the Church and to use the cleared land for off-street parking. The agency (The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington) in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, as required by Section 36 CFR 800.4 of the Federal Regulations, found the proposed project will have an adverse effect upon the district. As a result, a Preliminary Case Report was submitted to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. A Memorandum of Agreement was then made between the Advisory Council, the County of Washington and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office stipulating that an historic record must be prepared in accordance with HABS/HAER guidelines.

Prepared by: Paul Driscoll, Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.
Consultants to the Redevelopment Authority of the County
of Washington, January 30, 1987.

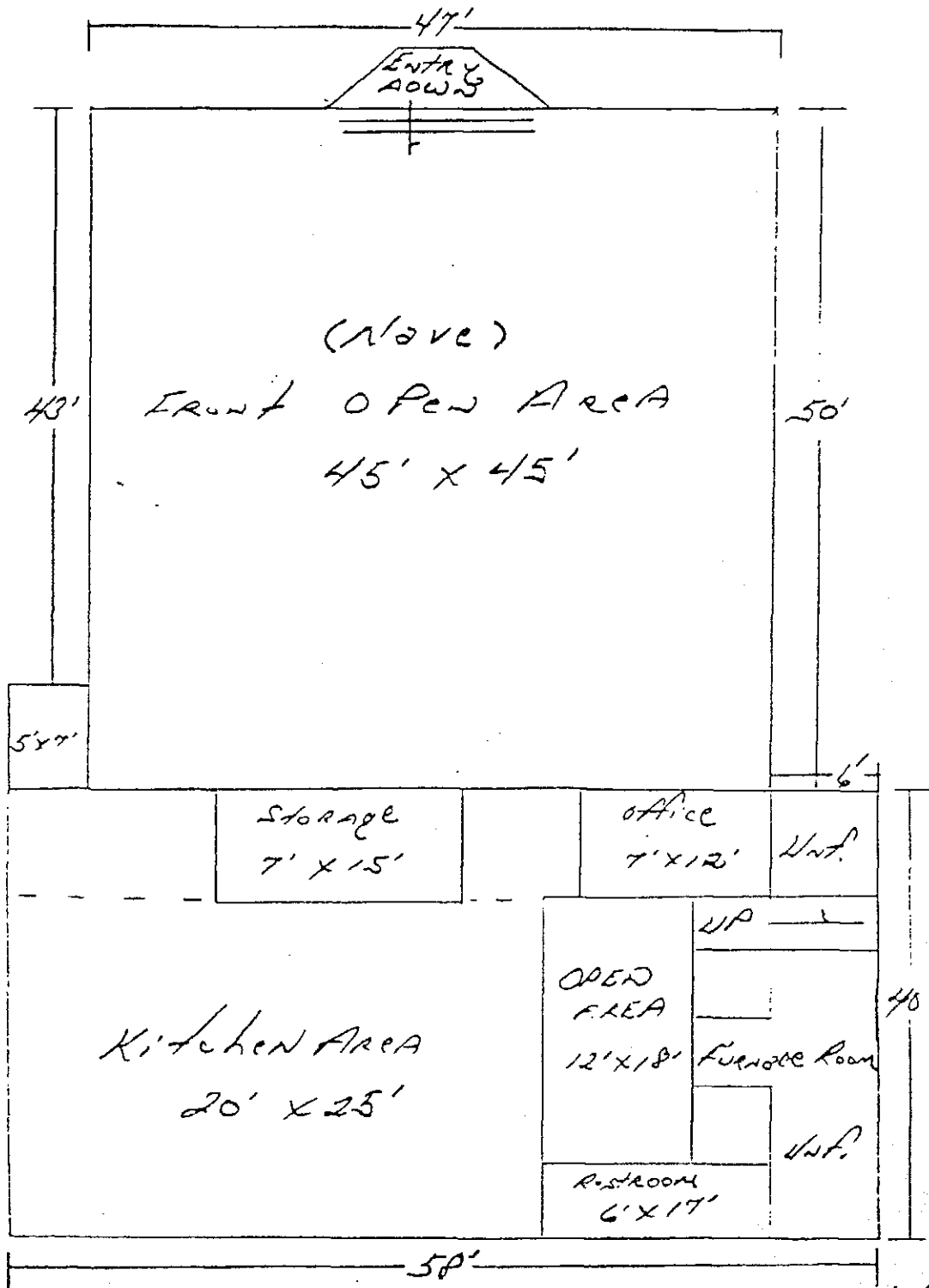


First Floor Above Grade



* Drawing Not to Scale

Basement Area



* Drawing Not to Scale